# Questions from the NBS Travel System
# Help Points of Contact/Organization Administrator Post-Deployment Meeting
# November 5, 2003

## Authorization

**1. Q: Why do I have to amend a travel authorization if I want to change the Project Code?**

**A:** Because the obligation has already been incurred against the original Project and the amendment de-obligates the funds from this Project and obligates them to the new Project. This same logic applies to the Expenditure Type since this data element is also part of the accounting information.

**2. Q: If a car rental was not on the original authorization, do I need to create an amendment to add a car rental expense?**

**A:** You will only need to create an amendment if your IC requires an additional approval for the rental car expense since the document will need to be re-routed to obtain that approval. If your IC does not require an amendment, you must check the "final voucher" if the car rental causes a new expense category to be added to the voucher that wasn't on the original authorization. If you choose not to select "final voucher" then the authorization must be amended.

**3. Q: Should I select *Travel Card* or *Other* for the payment method for Lodging/M&IE?**

**A:** If the travel card was used, you need to select "Travel Card" which is the default option for these expenses. If the traveler paid cash, you need to select "Other" payment method. Both of these payment methods indicate that the expense is an expense being reimbursed to the traveler from the IC's (Direct) Project (CAN).

**4. Q: Can approvers see allocation details from the accounting code screen in "view only" mode?**

**A:** No. Approvers must open the document in "edit mode" to see all of the details.

**5. Q: Can I see the comments on each expense in *view only* mode?**

**A:** Yes. Select the "gray" pencil next to each expense.

**6. Q: Is the sponsor search case sensitive?**

**A:** No. However, to maximize the search process for a sponsor, be sure to place the wildcard (*) value before and after the major word in the sponsor's name.

**7. Q: If a trip type is for 12 – 24 hours with lodging, is the per diem being calculated correctly?**

**A:** Yes, the system per diem calculation is correct because the policy has changed. The traveler now gets a ¾ allowance.

**8. Q: If I try to add a group member, does the system check to see if he/she is already a member of the group?**

**A:** Yes.

**9. Q: How do I enter M&IE for a sponsored trip when part of the meals on one day is in-kind and part is cash?**

**A:** You must enter meals for one type of payment method in the M&IE screen and the meals for the other payment method under a miscellaneous expense in the Expenses screen. When you enter the portion of the meals in the M&IE screen, you have to use the override button to enter just the amount for meals being reimbursed under the first payment method. The remaining meals (for second payment method) are entered as Misc. Expense on Expense screen.

**10. Q: When do I delete an authorization?**

**A:** Delete a Travel Authorization with a status of:

**Created** - Planners, Reviewers, and Approvers can DELETE a Travel Authorization by using the *Delete Documents* feature.
**Prepared, Certified, Adjusted, Reviewed, Returned, or Conditionally Approved** - ONLY Approvers can CANCEL a Travel Authorization using the *Open Existing Documents* feature and stamping the document CANCELLED.
**Approved** - Users (Planners, Reviewers, or Approvers) email the NIH Help Desk (mailto:helpdesk@mail.nih.gov) to request deletion of an approved document. The email must include the Traveler's Name and the Document Number to be deleted.

**11. Q: Can I start preparing an authorization if my sponsor is not in the system?**
**A:** Yes. You can input trip details while you are waiting for the sponsor information. However, the authorization cannot be routed without the sponsor information.

**12. Q: If the sponsor indicates they will pay for all expenses, why do I have to select a reimbursable CAN?**
**A:** You should always add a reimbursable Project Code to your authorization to indicate which project will pay for expenses if the sponsor does not cover everything. Add an expense for a small amount as a miscellaneous expense, and allocate it to this project.

**13. Q: How do you have a non-NIH employee certify their travel document?.**
**A:** For Non NIH-Affiliated Travelers, the Planner should print a hardcopy of the PDF, forward it to the traveler for hardcopy signature. The Planner then sends the hard copy on to the Approver. The approver then uses the Open Existing Document feature of the NBS Travel System to open and stamp the Document. (Reference: Reviewer/Approver student guide)

**14. Q: When expenses are in kind and there is no project number cited, how will NIH track sponsored expenses?**
**A:** All sponsored travel documents MUST include both a Direct and a Reimbursable Project (CAN). If there are only In-kind expenses, they still must include them. (Reference: HPOC Frequently Asked Questions from the 11/16/03 meeting and the corresponding presentation.)

**15. Q: For non-FTEs, how do you enter a sponsored trip?**
**A:** When preparing a travel authorization for an affiliated NIH Non-FTE traveler (i.e., visiting fellow):

- When creating the authorization, the Travel Planner selects either "domestic or foreign" for the purpose, thus, does not select "sponsored domestic/foreign". Once the Domestic or Foreign Authorization is selected, the payment methods are filtered so sponsored payment methods do not display. The policy for the non-FTEs accepting travel expenses from sponsors is only accepted IN-KIND. Since the Fellow cannot accept cash or reimbursable expenses from the sponsor, any expense that is not covered in-kind must be paid by the IC from the direct funds. Only those expenses will show on the Travel Authorization and Voucher.

- If the IC is not supporting the trip, then create the Authorization for $0 and have it routed and CONDITIONALLY APPROVED, but not Final Approved (if the IC wants to formally APPROVE it, then have them print the hard copy and do a manual signature to that effect). DO NOT Voucher against a $0 Authorization in the NBS System.

- Additionally, from a policy standpoint, the traveler must fill out the Non-FTE Sponsored Travel Checklist (the Ethics Checklist for Fellows and non-FTE individuals). This form is located on the Travel Community Portal page. (Reference: 1500 - TRAVEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES; Issuing Office: OFM 435-2927; Release Date: 01/23/03; Appendix 10B; Certification Checklist for Sponsored Travel of Non-FTE Persons).

## Voucher

**1. Q: When do I use the Final Voucher checkbox? What if this is not the final voucher?**

**A:** Always check the Final Voucher checkbox when the Traveler has submitted *all* related travel receipts. This de-obligates any outstanding funds and closes the Travel Authorization.

When you create a voucher, the Travel program looks at the corresponding authorization and compares the expected expenses, expense types, and payment methods listed in the authorization with the actual expense information on the voucher. If the Voucher information is different in these areas, or if the total amount on the voucher exceeds the approved amount on the authorization, you will not be able to approve the voucher without taking some action.

- If the expense amount on the voucher is greater than the authorization and is less than 25% greater than the authorization, the Voucher can be routed and approved by checking the Final Voucher checkbox. The NBS Travel System automatically adjusts for minor costs added to expenses that are already entered on the original Authorization. In this case the authorization does not need to be amended.

- If the Travel Voucher *exceeds* the corresponding Authorization by more than 25%, there may be excessive costs that would best be handled by an amendment to the original document. Additional funds should be obligated through an amended authorization *before* a voucher is completed.

- You are required to check the Final Voucher Checkbox when:
  a) the Travel Voucher amount is greater than the original Travel Authorization
  b) there is a difference in payment method for an expense (for example, a sponsor expense becomes an IC expense because the sponsor did not pay), or
  c) there is a difference in expense category in the cost options box .
- If the Traveler still has outstanding receipts and you do not want to check the Final Voucher checkbox, *create an amended Travel Authorization prior to creating the Travel Voucher, and leave the final voucher checkbox blank when you do the voucher.*

**2. Q: What if the voucher has already been started when the need for the amendment is identified?**

**A:** If the voucher has not been approved, it can be deleted and a new one created for the amended Authorization after it has been approved.

**3. Q: Who has the ability to check the Final Voucher checkbox?**

**A:** Anyone can check this box; however, if anyone other than the planner wants to check it, he/she needs to verify that the planner has received all receipts. If no more receipts are expected,
check the Final Voucher checkbox and route the document.

**4. Q: How long will it take for a traveler to receive payment for an approved voucher?**

**A:** The traveler will be paid 3 - 5 business days after the voucher is approved or 10 - 14 business days if there is no ACH information on file.

**5. Q: When can I delete a Voucher?**

**A:** Only Approvers can use the *Delete Documents* feature to delete Vouchers that have not been stamped Approved.

6. **Q: Can a voucher be approved without the traveler certification?**
**A:** No.

7. **Q: Can an AO approver approve an amendment for funding if no other trip details have hanged?**
**A:** Yes.

## System Functionality

1. **Q: What does the *taxable check box* do?**
**A:** The NBS System is not currently using this functionality.

2. **Q: Why are some non-affiliated travelers getting emails when their travel documents are approved?**
**A:** Because you have entered an email address in the email field of the Traveler's profile. It is recommend that you remove the email address if you do not wish them to receive an email notification.

3. **Q: In the Route and Review module, why is the Route & Review module highlighted in black?**
**A:** You do not have the correct permission levels in the system to access that module.

4. **Q: How can I route a document if there is a problem with the traveler's profile or the routing list?**
**A:** First, the Organization Administrator must correct the traveler's profile or routing list. Then the original document should be copied and any Other Authorizations re-selected. When the planner stamps prepared, the document should route correctly.

5. **Q: Is the System calculating M&IE for a trip with a destination across the international dateline?**
**A:** The NBS Travel System has been updated to calculate the correct M&IE amounts for trips that cross the International Dateline. For trips created in the system *after* 11/17, it is no longer necessary to manually adjust these amounts. If you have a trip that was created in the system *before* 11/17 with multiple destinations with different per diem rates and it has not yet been vouchered, follow the steps in the job aid "M&IE Adjustment for Travel Across International Dateline to Multiple Locations" **http://nbs.nih.gov/pdf/IntDateLine.pdf**.

6. **Q: If the traveler's default browser is Netscape, the eVoucher link in his/her email will not work.**
**A:** The traveler will either have to change his/her default browser to Internet Explorer (IE) or copy and paste the weblink into IE's address bar.

## PDF

1. **Q: Will the truncation of payment methods be corrected on the first page of the PDF?**
**A:** Yes.

2. **Q: How are the payment methods represented on the PDF?**
**A:** An "R" indicates a reimbursable expense, an "O" indicates a direct expense, and an "I" indicates an In-kind expense.

# Organization Administrator

1. **Q: Will there be additional training for Organization Administrators (OA)?**
   **A:** Yes. The NIH Training Center is offering classes in December and January.

2. **Q: Which address should the OA use for Non-affiliated travelers - home or office?**
   **A:** The home address should be used.

# Miscellaneous

1. **Q: When I call for help, how can I get an immediate response on an emergency issue?**
   **A:** You can alert the Help Desk that it is a *work stoppage issue* or ask them to put you through to the next level of support. You should only take these steps for issues that are urgent in nature.

2. **Q: What do I need to do if I have a problem with a mailing address being incorrect in EHRP?**
   **A:** Discuss the problem with your HR specialist.

3. **Q: Is the Help Desk still sending users back to the HPOCs?**
   **A:** Yes. This procedure is still in effect.

4. **Q: When employees change ICs, their domain information may not be updated in NED. Can the NBS Team work with CIT to ensure the domain update is made?**
   **A:** The IC rather than CIT needs to make the changes.

5. **Q: Why wasn't the NBS Travel System "piloted" with a few ICs prior to NIH-wide deployment?**
   **A:** During the early stages of the Project, NIH leadership decided to implement the NBS modules in phases over the course of several years. This approach, however, directly correlates the project's budget to the overall implementation timeframe for all of the modules.

Before launching the Travel component, the NBS Project Management Team conducted extensive research. Piloting the NBS Travel System meant running two accounting systems – each requiring costly custom-built interfaces that were only needed to support the pilot testing period but not the new System. Building the temporary interfaces would also require an extension of the entire project's timeline, resulting in a substantial negative impact on the NBS's budget.

The NIH chose "acceptance testing" as a feasible alternative for verifying NBS Travel System functions prior to go-live. The NBS project team partnered with over 100 members of the Travel community to rigorously test the NBS Travel System and confirm that it met the NIH community's requirements.